

## Recommended Tree Species for Boulder

Last Updated Tuesday, 12 September 2006

Boulder's microclimate and soils allow us to grow a wider variety of tree species than elsewhere along the Front Range. Traditionally, trees such as green ash, white ash, silver maple and blue spruce have been overplanted. The following is a list of alternative species that will do well in the Boulder area. There are exotic species that might do well but the following is a list of those species that are cold hardy, will do well in the Boulder area and are available locally in nurseries.

Small trees

Medium trees

Large tree

### SMALL TREES

Goldenraintree (*Koelreuteria paniculata*)

Mature height: 20'-30'

Mature spread 20'-30'

Goldenraintree is drought tolerant and adaptable to alkaline soil conditions. It has beautiful yellow flowers in July and requires a sunny location.

[Back to Top](#)

Hawthorn

(Crataegus spp.)

Mature height: 15'-25'

Mature spread: 15'-25'

Hawthorns have adaptable water requirements and tolerate alkaline soil conditions. They have beautiful white flowers in the spring and often turn bronze to red in the fall. Small, dark red fruit persist into the winter and are a preferred food source for birds.

[Back to Top](#)

Lilac, Japanese tree

(Syringa reticulata)

Mature height: 15'-25'

Mature spread: 15'-25'

Japanese tree lilac is a small tree or large shrub that produces large, pyramidal clusters of small flowers during late spring. The fall color is a golden yellow.

[Back to Top](#)

## Maple, Rocky Mountain

(*Acer glabrum*)

Mature height: 10'-20'

Mature spread: 10'-15'

Rocky mountain maple is a native tree or large shrub with yellow fall color. Unlike other maples it can be grown in partial shade.

[Back to Top](#)

## Maple, Tatarian

(*Acer tataricum*)

Mature Height: 15'- 20'

Mature Spread: 15'- 20'

Has a broad irregular form, similar to a ginnala maple, but more tolerant of both drought and alkaline soil conditions. In June the winged seeds are pink to red and the fall color can be a striking yellow to orange-red. Newer varieties are available with a more brilliant seed and fall color.

[Back to Top](#)

## Maple, Wasatch / Bigtooth

(*Acer grandidentatum*)

Mature height: 10'-20'

Mature spread: 10'-15'

Wasatch maple is a very cold hardy native tree that is tolerant of dry or alkaline soil conditions. This maple has a striking fall color turning shades of yellow, orange or red.

[Back to Top](#)

## Oak, Gambel

(*Quercus gambelii*)

Mature height: 8'-20'

Mature spread: 6'-12'

Gambel oak is a large shrub or small tree and a Colorado native. It is very cold hardy and can tolerate dry or alkaline soil conditions. The fall color is golden yellow in most years but occasionally turns orange to red.

[Back to Top](#)

## MEDIUM TREES

### Buckeye, Ohio

(*Aesculus glabra*)

Mature Height: 30'- 40'

Mature Spread: 30'- 40'

Ohio buckeye prefers well drained soil and full sun but is considered to be drought tolerant. Large, pale greenish-yellow flowers appear in mid-May and the fruit is smooth, only slightly smaller than a horsechestnut. Fall color is often yellow but at times develops a nice orange-red to reddish-brown, best termed a pumpkin orange.

[Back to Top](#)

Filbert, Turkish

(*Corylus columna*)

Mature height: 30'-40'

Mature spread: 20'-30'

Turkish filbert is quite drought tolerant once established and can survive adverse growing conditions. It has a very formal pyramidal shape and can have yellow to purple fall color.

[Back to Top](#)

## Hornbeam, European

(*Carpinus betulus*)

Mature height: 25'-35'

Mature spread: 15'-25'

European hornbeam has a very pyramidal shape that is excellent for screens, hedges or formal groupings. The bark and branches are a smooth, steel gray that adds interest to the landscape in the winter.

[Back to Top](#)

## Linden, Littleleaf

(*Tilia cordata*)



Mature Height: 40'- 50'

Mature Spread: 30'- 35'

Littleleaf linden is tolerant of alkaline soils but requires a well-irrigated site. A densely pyramidal tree with small, heart shaped leaves and aromatic flowers in June to July. Young trees are subject to winter sunscald.

[Back to Top](#)

Maple, Hedge

(*Acer campestre*)

Mature height:

Mature spread:

Hedge maple is probably the best maple for dry, alkaline soils. The shape overall is rather informal but can be pruned to be more formal. Fall color is yellow.

[Back to Top](#)

## Pear, Callery

(*Pyrus calleryana*)

Mature Height: 30'- 35'

Mature Spread: 15'- 20'

Most varieties of callery pear are considered to be adaptable to all soil types and drought tolerant. They have an upright to narrowly pyramidal form and are generally thornless and fruitless. Callery pears consistently produce nice, white flowers in early spring and red-purple fall color. 'Chanticleer' is the most common and one of the better varieties.

[Back to Top](#)

## Pear, Ussurian

(*Pyrus ussuriensis*)

Mature height: 20'-30'

Mature spread: 20'-30'

Ussurian pear is the hardiest of all pears and least susceptible to fireblight. It has an upright formal shape with pink to white flowers in the spring and yellow fall color. May sustain some storm damage from early spring snows because of its tendency to leaf out so early in the spring.

[Back to Top](#)

## LARGE TREES

Catalpa

(*Catalpa speciosa*)

Mature height: 40'-60'

Mature spread: 30'-50'

Catalpa is adaptable to dry alkaline soils and can withstand extreme heat. It has large, showy white flowers in early summer. Catalpas have an informal, rugged silhouette that adds much winter interest.

[Back to top](#)

## Coffeetree, Kentucky

(*Gymnocladus dioicus*)

Mature height: 60'-70'

Mature spread: 40'-50'

Kentucky coffeetree is a very drought tolerant tree. Leaves emerge pinkish, becoming dark green, then golden yellow in the fall.

[Back to top](#)

## Hackberry

(*Celtis occidentalis*)

Mature height: 50'-60'

Mature spread: 40'-50'

Hackberry is a native tree that adapts to a wide range of soil conditions and is quite drought tolerant. It performs well under windy conditions. The trunk and older branches have narrow, corky ridges that add winter interest to the landscape. It produces small, reddish-purple fruit in the fall that attracts birds.

[Back to top](#)

## Honeylocust

(*Gleditsia triacanthos* var. *inermis*)

Mature height: 40'-50'

Mature spread: 30'-40'

An open rounded tree with slightly arching branches turning upward at the ends. Rich green, small oval leaflets make up the light textured leaves that become a bright yellow in the fall. These varieties are both seedless and thornless.

[Back to top](#)

Horsechestnut

(*Aesculus hippocastanum*)

Mature Height: 50'- 75'

Mature Spread: 40'- 70'

Horsechestnut is adaptable to a wide range of soil conditions but prefers a well-drained soil and full sun. It has beautiful, large, white showy flowers in mid-May and 2" diameter spiny fruit. Can be a very large tree best suited for large yards.

[Back to top](#)

Linden , American

(*Tilia americana* )

Mature Height: 50'- 75'

Mature Spread: 40'- 50'



American linden is tolerant of alkaline soils but requires a well-irrigated site. Tall, stately, pyramidal tree with heart shaped leaves and aromatic flowers in June to July. Young trees are subject to winter sunscald.

[Back to top](#)

Maple, Sugar

(*Acer saccharum*)

Mature Height: 50'- 75'

Mature Spread: 40'- 50'

Sugar maple is best suited to both the Mapleton and University Hill areas of Boulder where the soils are more acidic. They require a well-irrigated site. Sugar maples have one of the best fall color displays varying from yellow to red to orange. They are a better choice for Boulder landscapes than the popular Autumn Blaze maples; their wood is stronger and therefore more tolerant of our snow and wind storms.

[Back to top](#)

Oak, Bur

(*Quercus macrocarpa*)

Mature height: 60'-80'

Mature spread: 60'-80'

Bur oak is a massive tree with a broad rounded crown at maturity. It is drought tolerant and can tolerate a wide range of soil conditions. Leaves turn yellow brown to brown in the fall.

[Back to top](#)

Oak, English

(*Quercus robur*)

Mature height: 40'-60'

Mature spread: 40'-60'

English oak is a massive, broadly rounded tree with a short trunk that is adaptable to a wide range of soil conditions. It is one of the few white oaks that has a good yellow fall color.

[Back to top](#)

## Oak, Swamp white

(*Quercus bicolor*)

Mature height: 50'-60'

Mature spread: 50'-60'

Swamp white oak has an attractive reddish brown to gray bark that sheds in ragged, papery flakes when young. Leaves often turn a golden yellow in the fall.

[Back to top](#)

## Fir, White

(*Abies concolor*)

Mature height: 40'-60'

Mature spread: 20'-30'

White fir is drought tolerant and can withstand the heat well. It is tolerant of city conditions but prefers a less alkaline soil. It is a native evergreen that is an excellent substitute for blue spruce in the landscape.

[Back to top](#)

Pine, Bristlecone

(*Pinus aristata*)

Mature Height: 15'- 30'

Mature Spread: 15'- 25'

Colorado native that will succeed in poor, rocky, alkaline soils and is drought tolerant once established. It has a bushy, irregular shape with dark green needles, dotted with white resin. Bristlecones are some of the oldest living trees on Earth estimated to be 4000-5000 years old.

[Back to top](#)

Pine, Limber

(*Pinus flexilis*)

Mature height: 30'-60'

Mature spread: 25'-45'

Limber pine is a native species that grows well in windy areas. It is adaptable to a wide range of soils and is very drought tolerant. This evergreen has beautiful contrasting blue-green needles and silvery-grey bark.

[Back to top](#)

## Pine, Scotch

(*Pinus sylvestris*)

Mature height: 30'-50'

Mature spread: 20'- 30'

Scotch pine will grow in dry, poor sites. It has an open informal shape with a smooth, orange papery bark. It can be used as a specimen or in groupings.

[Back to top](#)

## Pine, Southwestern white

(*Pinus strobiformis*)

Mature Height: 45'-60'

Mature Spread: 30'-40'

Southwestern white pine is native to extreme southwestern Colorado . This tree is surprisingly cold hardy and has soft, dark bluish green needles with cones averaging 6" - 7" in length. It is an excellent evergreen that is underused in our landscapes.



[Back to top](#)

Consider using these alternative trees in your landscape. Most of the deciduous trees listed above are also appropriate for use as street trees. If you would like information on street tree plantings call the Parks and Recreation Forestry Section at 303-441-4406 (Monday - Friday, Hours: 7:00 AM to 3:30 PM).

[Back to top](#)

[back to Urban Forestry main page](#)